(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether IOC has also submitted an expression of interest in other State-owned refineries abroad; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. IOC submitted an Expression of Interest/Pre-qualification Documents with the Privatisation Administration (PA) of Turkey on 14-6-2005 for acquiring 51% of the share capital of M/s. Turkish Petroleum Refineries Corporation (TUPRAS). The due diligence process is currently in progress. The binding bid will have to be submitted to the PA of Turkey by the 2nd September, 2005.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. In November 2003, IOC submitted an Expression of Interest for acquiring 51% or more of the shares of the Federal Government of Nigeria in each of the three Nigerian refineries, viz Kaduna Refinery & Petrochemical Complex; Port Harcourt Refinery Complex, and Warri Refinery & Petrochemical Complex. However, on a fresh assessment of the risks involved in the proposal, such as the uncertain pricing environment, the unclear regulatory framework and poor profitability of the downstream sector, IOC have decided that they should not pursue this investment opportunity.

National Mission on Bio-Diesel

2299. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that rising oil prices and uncertainties caused by geopolitical instability are the threats to import dependant countries like India with the possibilities of economic collapse;

(b) while welcoming the move of the Government to go for National Mission on Bio-diesel, what are the other efforts taken to encourage the States to go for culturation of Jatrophacurcas, as the issue of energy security had to be given top priority; and

(c) the States which are pretty serious of this process and what are the varied measures and assistance given to such States?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Since India imports over 75% its crude oil requirements, concern about assurance of supplies of crude oil and very high International crude oil prices poses the difficulties in meeting targets of economic growth.

(b) and (c) *Jatropha Curcus,* a non-edible oil seed bearing plant, is found all over India. Oil from *Jatropha Curcus* has used in pesticide, soap, candles, varnish and use as lubricant, hydraulic oil etc. and also as possible feedstock for the manufacture of bio-diesel. According to the National Oil Seeds and Vegetable Oils Development (NOVOD) Board, many State Governments, in association with the NOVOD Board, are undertaking extension measures for the cultivation of *Jatropha Curcus.* Under instruction of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA), has opened a bio-diesel information centre, which inter alia, also disseminates information on non-edible oilseed bearing plants like *Jatropha Curcus.*

The State Governments take measures for promoting crops and plantations according to their own priorities. However, any assistance by the Central Government to the States for the proposed National Mission on Bio-diesel, which inter alia proposes large scale cultivation of *Jatropha Curcus,* would become due only after the proposed National Mission receives approval in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Government.

Demand for petrol and diesel in Kerala

2300. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Public Sector Oil Companies allotted a large number of petrol outlets in Kerala during the last three years;

(b) whether these oil companies made any study of the total demand of petrol and diesel in the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what was the annual increase in sales of petrol and diesel by these oil companies in Kerala during the last three years?